

National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL): Fact Sheet for States

Benefits of State Participation

- Assess the literacy of your state's adult population, and their use of literacy in workplace, family, and community settings.
- Compare your state to the nation, and to other participating states.
- Measure trends in literacy (if participated in 1992), and establish a new health literacy trend.
- Augment your state's sample by using the national data for your state.
- Conduct in-depth analysis of literacy using enhanced national sample.

Key Features

- The NAAL items assess three literacy domains: Prose, Document, and Quantitative. Literacy tasks utilize materials adults encounter in daily lives.
- A random, nationally representative, sample of about 13,000 adults living in households, ages 16 and older, will be drawn in proportion to the national population.
- The literacy assessment and the background questionnaire will be administered to adults in their households by trained interviewers. The total administration time is about 90 minutes.
- The NAAL background questionnaires will be administered in English and Spanish.
- African Americans and Hispanics will be oversampled.
- Results from the NAAL will describe the literacy of major population subgroups, including adults whose first language is not English, and will examine the relationships between literacy and various community, work and home experiences.

New Features of NAAL

- ***Focus on the performance of low-literate adults.*** NCES has embarked on new procedures to provide a clearer picture of what adults at the lower end of literacy scales know and can do.

Adult Literacy Supplemental Assessment (ALSA). ALSA is designed to determine how adults at the low end of the literacy scales negotiate print even if they cannot read connected text.

Skill Profiles. NAAL will further distinguish among critical literacy skills, by describing the cognitive skills possessed by low literate adults.

- ***Special NAAL Health Literacy Component (HLC).*** NCES will provide quantitative measures and a baseline for the health literacy objectives established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The HLC tasks represent three health literacy domains (clinical activities, prevention activities, and navigating the health care system), and are designed to elicit adults' knowledge and skills in locating and understanding health-related information and services.
- ***Expanded NAAL Background Questionnaire.*** During the past decade, the demographic composition of the population has changed dramatically. NCES has expanded the NAAL background questionnaire to capture these changes and relate them to literacy performance. New areas include job training, health, as well as questions on technology throughout the background questionnaire.

Costs and Schedule of Payments

- The cost for a statewide sample of 1,000 attempted assessments conducted through personal interviews in respondent households is \$725,000 per state.
- States may pay the costs of state participation according to the following schedule:
 - First payment due November 1, 2001
\$ 190,000
 - First week of August 2002
\$ 220,000
 - First week of December 2002
\$ 220,000
 - Last week of October 2003
\$ 95,000

Timeline and Milestones

- **November 1, 2001:** the deadline for states to sign up in order to obtain an integrated state and national sample. Contact **Mark Kutner**, NAAL Project Director for AIR ((202) 944-5321, mkutner@air.org) to obtain the NAAL State Participation Agreement Form.
- **Fall 2001:** the field test of the instruments and procedures, using a national sample of 1,325 adults.
- **Fall 2002-Winter 2003:** the main data collection for the national and participating state samples of adults.
- **Spring 2003-Winter 2004:** the data analysis and reporting.

For More Information

To find out more about the NAAL, visit our website at <http://nces.ed.gov/naal>, or contact Sheida White, NAAL Project Officer, National Center for Education Statistics, by telephone at (202) 502-7473, or by email at sheida.white@ed.gov.